The parameters to be used for such identification should be simple and easily comprehensible, allowing objective measurement without the use of discretion. The identification should be based on a door-to-door survey with the survey teams including at least one person form the Area Sabha concerned. The urban poor so identified may be issued multi-utility identity cards for availing benefits under all poverty alleviation programmes."

(c) Other major recommendations of the Commission with regard to urban poverty are:

(i) After identifying the urban poor through surveys, a mission mode approach would need to be adopted for alleviating urban poverty in a time-bound and systematic manner. The urban local bodies may also have their own poverty alleviation schemes with adequate background and forward linkages converging with the other poverty alleviation schemes.

00 The thrust of the urban poverty alleviation schemes should be on upgradation of skills and training.

(iii) In case of setting up of micro-enterprises, the urban poverty alleviation schemes should be flexible in selecting projects and providing financial assistance.

(iv) To maximize the benefits of micro-finance, formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) need to be encouraged. Institutions and NGOs with good track record should be encouraged to promote SHGs for availing micro-finance.

(v) The education plan should form an integral part of the development plan for the city.

(vi) Urban Local Bodies should adopt the concept of'Primary Health Care' for providing health and medical facilities to the urban poor, particularly to women and children with the help of auxiliary staff. These should specifically cater to the population living in slum areas.

(vii) There has to be total redevelopment of slum areas. While redeveloping, it should be ensured that adequate provision has been made for schools, health centre, sanitation etc.

(viii) It is necessary to earmark and reserve a certain percentage of land in housing projects in each town and city for the urban poor. If a construction cannot allocate housing for the poor, the developer must, at his own cost, provide suitable housing in any other appropriate place acceptable to the authorities.

(ix) A detailed programme for the provision of night shelters needs to be drawn up in all cities, beginning with large cities having Metropolitan and Municipal Corporations, for implementation.

Opening of philanthropic centres

272. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to open philanthropic centres through the NRIs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has entered into an MoU with American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in the healthcare sector for the purpose, for treatment of various diseases; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) During the Sixth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, 2008 held at New Delhi on 7th to 9th January, 2008, a Plenary Session on 'Diaspora Philanthropy: Empowerment of Rural Women' was organized to discuss the modes of participation and the kind of Institutional support that the overseas Indians would require to channelise their philanthropic propensities for rural development and empowerment of women in India. A proposal to establish a 'not-for-profit' Foundation which will serve as a credible institutional mechanism to assist the Overseas Indians to contribute to the social causes is under examination.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had signed an MoU with the American % Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) on 7th January, 2006 at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to promote innovative healthcare in the rural sector. The Scheme envisages implementing medical care for certain debilitating diseases as a pilot project in two States *viz.* Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The launching of the programme is being worked out in consultation with the State Governments.

No funds to States without DPCs

273. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has decided not to release Rs. 4,700 crore due to the State Governments under the Government's Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) because of their failure to set up District Planning Commissions (DPCs);

(b) whether his Ministry and PMO agreed that incentives be given only to the States which set up DPCs to encourage non-performers to do better;

(c) whether Ministry has released Rs. 1,100 crore from BRGF till December, 2007;

(d) the States which have not set up the DPCs; and

(e) the concrete measures and steps the Union Government is considering to take to provide assistance to these States?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MAN1 SHANKAR AJYAR): (a) The establishment of District Planning Committees and the consolidation of draft district plans by DPCs in conformity with Article 243ZD of the Constitution is the "sine qua non" of the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF). At the same time it is recognised that in the initial stages a measure of flexibility has to be built into the programme without transgressing the approved architecture of the programme. In the case of Jharkhand, where Panchayat elec- [4] tions are still to be held since the matter is *sub-judice,* consideration is being given to ways of addressing the conundrum. Of course, in areas exempted from the application of Parts IX and IX-A of the Constitution, parallel arrangements based on the recommendations of the [f] Expert Committee on Planning for the Sixth Schedule Areas and those Areas not covered by Parts IX and IX-A of the Constitution, chaired by Shri V. Ramachandran, would suffice.

(b) Yes, Sir. A scheme entitled "Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability incentive Scheme" is already in operation. Efforts are being made to augment the funding under the Scheme. The Scheme *inter alia* takes into account the progress made towards establishing DPCs and empowering them as provided for in the Constitution.